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261620Z Jun 03

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 AMMAN 003838

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [KPAO](#) [ECON](#) [OVIP](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: PA AMMAN'S WEF COVERAGE

1. Summary: The June 21-23 Extraordinary Meeting of the World Economic Forum at the Dead Sea provided the USG an unprecedented opportunity to highlight for much of the world's media -- and, in particular, the usually ultra-critical Arab satellite TV channels -- positive messages and new foreign policy initiatives toward the nations of the Middle East. The main achievement was getting out our MEFTA and MEPI messages as well as U.S. dedication to the Road Map through the Arab satellites and regional as well as local print media. This was in vivid contrast to the skeptical or outright accusatory prism through which Arab media often portray U.S. policies towards the region. U.S. delegates to the Forum put on a media blitz, ensuring the fullest possible coverage of U.S. initiatives, and marking a major step forward in laying out both the broad vision as well as the details of the Administration's Middle East policy. PA Amman thanks all delegation members and their staffs for their willingness to cooperate in these activities, appearing willingly under the lights for multiple television, radio, print and electronic media sessions throughout the conference. PA Amman also thanks NEA/PD and IIP for their excellent support by providing critical TDY personnel, without which our efforts could not have been carried out. End summary.

Deeds and Words

2. The WEF Dead Sea meeting was a major media event. With over 400 journalists accredited to cover the conference, it offered the USG an unprecedented platform from which to highlight a number of positive U.S. initiatives towards the Middle East. Building a strong and coherent message of hope and opportunity around the President's proposal of a U.S. - Middle East Free Trade Area and his personal commitment to implementation of the Roadmap, U.S. proposals dominated discussion at the Forum, and the media reporting that followed. The strongest message of all, however, was sent by the sheer size and seniority of the U.S. delegation. The image of Secretary Powell, USTR Zoellick, Ambassador Bremer, USAID Administrator Natsios, U/S Larson, A/S Burns, DAS Cheney, senior House and Senate delegations and many other senior USG officials participating in sessions and appearing before the media conveyed a message of confidence in a new, integrated U.S. approach to this troubled region which addresses not only its conflicts but the desire for prosperity, freedom and hope. The decision to embrace this Forum and to use it as an opportunity to convey this integrated U.S. approach made for a powerful message.

3. Over a week prior to the conference, NEA/PD forwarded to PA Amman a memo laying out a pre-conference press plan of speeches, DVC's and on-the-record briefings that would set the stage for the U.S. messages to be delivered at the conference. These included U/S Larson's appearance at the Foreign Press Center and the IIP-drafted op-ed for Ambassadors that Amman placed locally on June 21. These efforts provided post a basis upon which to prepare a media strategy for the period covering the Forum. Without confirmation of availability or willingness of Department principals to engage media at the conference, PA Amman developed a press plan that sought to generate wide exposure and understanding of USG initiatives at the WEF. These included the MEFTA, but also MEPI, USAID activities in the region, and Iraq rebuilding efforts. Our proposals were forwarded to the Secretary's party en route to the conference and we received encouragement to engage as many USG delegates as possible in support of our media strategy.

So Many Messages, So Many Messengers

4. When we began contacting principals with ideas for media appearances, we found near-universal willingness to engage. With so many media outlets represented at the Forum, in particular among the Arab media, our challenge became not convincing USG officials to appear before media, but how to choose the appropriate outlets to maximize the impact of their time. And as the conference got underway and USG proposals came to dominate the agenda, more and more media requests came in. While we do not have a clear baseline from

which to measure, we believe that more USG officials engaged more Arab media in this 3-day period than may have ever been done before. In addition to plenary addresses and press conferences by US delegates to the Forum -- each of which was covered extensively by regional and international media, PA Amman organized the following media appearances:

-- Secretary Powell one-on-one interviews with Al Jazeera, Arabiya and Jordan Television Satellite networks;

-- USTR Zoellick one-on-one interviews with Al Jazeera, Abu Dhabi TV, CNBC and Bloomberg News; Radio Interview with Radio Sawa; Roundtable with Arab and International Print Media;

-- Ambassador Bremer briefed the US traveling press corps and offered exclusive comments to his traveling Iraqi press corps following a bilateral meeting with UNSYG Annan;

-- USAID Administrator Natsios briefed Arab Print Media;

-- U/S Larson gave an open press availability to all media reps on the first night of the Forum to preview USG initiatives and objectives; he then did Abu Dhabi TV and BBC Radio;

-- A/S Burns appeared on Al Jazeera and sat for two one-on-one interviews with Arab print media outlets.

-- DAS Cheney briefed 12 Arab print journalists on MEPI and US economic policy in the region.

-- Ambassador Gnehm appeared on Jordan TV before the conference and on Jordan Radio from the Dead Sea during it. We also placed the IIP-drafted op-ed under his name in local Arabic dailies on the first day of the Forum and provided a separate op-ed under his name to a special-edition business magazine produced locally for the conference.

15. We will be sending a separate cable detailing coverage in the Jordanian press resulting from the above efforts.

TDY Support Critical

16. Post would like to thank NEA/PD and IIP for their advance planning in support of the conference, as well as for providing critical TDY support, without which we could not have provided the coverage needed to take advantage of this unique opportunity. In particular, Jessica Davies did an excellent job in coordinating media appearances for US delegation members. We also worked closely with the two IIP Wireless File writer/editors sent to cover the event, Berta Gomez and Philip Kurata, and commend their hard work in covering so many different aspects of the Forum.
GNEHM